

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 251209Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9196

S E C R E T ROME 1121

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S REMARKS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SENATOR PERCY

1. AT LUNCHEON, JANUARY 22, 1975, IN JERUSALEM AT P.M.'S HOME FROM 1:30 TO 4:30 P.M., RABIN SAID THAT BE BELIEVED THE BASIC ISSUE IN ISRAEL ISN'T STABILITY BUT SURVIVAL -- "TO WHAT EXTENT WILL WE BE ABLE TO SURVIVE?" HE SAID THAT WHILE ISRAEL IS STRONGER THAN IT WAS PRIOR TO THE 1973 WAR, IT HAD TO BE TERRIBLY SURE THAT ANY SETTLEMENT WOULD NOT ENDANGER ITS SURVIVAL. ONCE THAT SURVIVAL WAS ASSURED, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO SECURE PEACE?

2. HE SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED FAISAL AND SADAT MORE MODERATE THAN ASSAD, IRAQ OR THE PLO. HE COMPLAINED THAT WHILE ARAB LEADERS IN GENERAL SAY THAT THEY ARE ALL FOR PEACE, AND THAT THEY TELL KISSINGER THEY WISH TO PURSUE A STEP-BY-STEP PATH TO PEACE, THEY REFUSE TO ENGAGE IN "PRACTICAL TALKS, MEANINGFUL TALKS." HE SAID THAT THEIR POLICY IS THAT THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE PEACE WITH ISRAEL ALL AT ONCE, AND THAT THEIR POLICY FROM THE START HAS BEEN TO HAVE A TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE. "I TEND TO AGREE WITH THAT," ADDED THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. HE SAID THAT IF THE GENERAL GOAL IS MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE, IT MUST BE A MUTUAL GIVING IN AND GETTING --"EACH SIDE HAS TO GIVE AND GET SOMETHING IN RETURN."

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4. CONCERNING THE PASSAGE OF ISRAELI CARGO IN THE SUEZ CANAL,

RABIN NOTED THAT IN THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, IT WAS AGREED THAT ONCE THE CANAL WAS OPENED, ISRAEL WOULD BE ALLOWED TO MOVE ITS CARGOES THERE. "NOW," HE COMPLAINED, "THEY'RE TRYING TO SELL US THE SAME CONCESSION TWICE." HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SO WORRIED ABOUT ISRAELI FLAGSHIPS, THAT HE WAS LESS INTERESTED IN TRYING TO SHOW THE FLAG THAN IN FUNDING A LONGER PERIOD OF TRANQUILITY. I EMPHASIZED THE SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE THAT WOULD BE ATTACHED TO ISRAELI FLAGSHIP PASSAGE THAT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

5. PM SAID THAT A REAL PEACE IS A CHANGE OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE, BUT TO ACHIEVE THAT, FIRST A PERIOD OF RELATIVE TRANQUILITY WAS NEEDED, NOT THREATS OF RESORT TO FORCE. "SUCH A CHANGE," HE ADDED, "TAKES TIME." HE SAID THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO RETURN SINAI TERRITORY, BUT THAT FIRST EGYPT HAS TO SHOW NOT JUST WORDS, BUT A READINESS TO MAKE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS. "WE WILL GIVE AS MUCH IN THE SINAI," HE SAID, "AS WE FEEL WE CAN GET IN RETURN."

6. WHEN I SAID THAT EGYPT AND MANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD GIVE ISRAEL ABSOLUTE RECOGNITION OF SOVEREIGNTY, RABIN REPLIED THAT "EGYPT HAS TO MAKE UP HER MIND." IF THEY WANT TO TALK ABOUT A FINAL SETTLEMENT, HE SAID, FINE. BUT, HE ADDED, LET'S SPELL OUT PRECISELY WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE PEACE-- "THE SPECIFICS OF PEACE, THE BOUNDARIES OF PEACE AND THE SAFEGUARDS TO MAINTAIN IT."

7. THE PRIME MINISTER QUOTED SEC. KISSINGER AS HAVING SAID TO HIM IN 1969 THAT THE LESSON OF HISTORY IS THAT ALL WARS START FROM A STATE OF PEACE, BUT THAT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALL WARS START FROM A STATE OF WAR. TODAY, SAID RABIN, KISSINGER SAYS THAT WE SHOULD MOVE TOWARD PEACE STEP BY STEP SO THAT WE CAN CHANGE THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AND BASIC ATTITUDES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND NOT TO DISCUSS A FINAL SETTLEMENT WHICH CAN ONLY UNIFY THE ARABS.

8. "DO WE TALK ABOUT A FINAL SETTLEMENT OR AN INTERIM SETTLEMENT?" ASKED RABIN. "SADAT," HE SAID, "HAS NOT SAID SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE IS WILLING TO GIVE UP FOR THE FIRST STEP EXCEPT WHAT HE GAVE UP EARLIER."

9. I NOTED THAT I HAD RECEIVED THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT SOME MOVEMENT ON THREE FRONTS WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE AND NECESSARY
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FROM THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW. RABIN SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD OFFERED TO HAVE A DEMILITARIZED ZONE AT THE LEBANESE BORDER, CONTROLLED BY ANYONE, INCLUDING THE UN; ISRAEL HAD SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS THERE COULD BE AN ADJOINING ZONE NEXT TO IT CONTROLLED BY LEBONON. HE SAID THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD REJECTED THE IDEA AS A GOOD BUT IMPRACTICAL ONE. "WE WANT A BARRIER AT THE LEBANESE BORDER," SAID RABIN. I CONCUR BUT DID NOT SO INDICATE TO RABIN BUT WE SHOULD DISCUSS ON MY RETURN. RABIN SAID THAT HE

THOUGHT A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST BE REACHED BY ISRAEL AND JORDAN; "WE DO NOT NEED A THIRD STATE TO CLOUD THE ISSUE," HE ADDED. HE SAID THAT THE PLO'S ULTIMATE GOAL IS THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL AS A JEWISH STATE, BUT THAT THEY WOULD SETTLE FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE IN THE MEANTIME. HE SAID THAT WHILE ISRAEL HAD SOMEIMTES REACTED VERY STRONGLY TO TERRORIST AGGRESSION, IT CERTAINLY HAD NEVER SET OUT TO KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVING ITS GOALS, SUCH AS THE PLO DOES AS A MATTER OF STANDARD PRACTICE. "WE DO NOT WISH TO DEAL WITH SUCH PEOPLE," HE ADDED.

10. I REPLIED BY STATING ISRAEL UNREALISTIC IN REFUSING DIRECT CONTACT WITH PLO NOW THAT ARAB WORLD INCLUDING HUSSEIN ARE UNITED IN SUPPORT OF ARAFAT AS SPOKESMAN FOR PALESTINIANS. THERE ARE FAR MORE EXTREMISTS IN MOVEMENT THAN ARAFAT. I SAID I HAD CONCLUDED I WOULD NOT MEET WITH ARAFAT ON THIS TRIP BUT DESCRIBED NON-CONFIDENTIAL PARTY OF MY TALK IN APARTMENT OF FORMER PM ISAEB SALAM OF LEBANON WITH WALID KHALID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PALESTINIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE AND PROFESSOR AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY BEIRUT, WHO IS A PRINCIPAL ADVISOR AND SPEECH WRITER, INCLUDING UN SPEECH, FOR ARAFAT.

11. RABIN AND I DISCUSSED UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEGOTIATIONS NOW WITH RELATIVELY MODERATE LEADERSHIP ON BOTH SIDES, CREDIBILITY AND RESPECT FOR HENRY KISSINGER ON BOTH SIDES, AND THE RECOGNITION THAT BOTH SIDES LOST HEAVILY IN 4TH WAR AND DEVASTATING POTENTIAL OF 5TH. I REITERATED SAME POSITIONS TAKEN IN MANY PREVIOUS TALKS, AND THAT FEAR EXISTED RABIN WOULD BE PUSHED INTO UNWISE COURSE BY ISRAEL HAWKS. I TOLD HIM MY STATEMENTS WOULD BE DESIGNED TO ISSUE FAIR AND PUBLIC WARNING TO THEM NOT TO OVERESTIMATE TRADITIONAL CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL NOW. PM ASSERTED HE WOULD NOT BE PRESSURED BY HARDLINERS INTO ANY ACTION NOT IN NATIONAL INTEREST.

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12. ATMOSHPERE OF RABIN AND ALLON MEETING ONE OF CORDIALITY AND OF OLD FRIENDS. DINNER WITH PERES MORE INTENESE.

13. DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME01121
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750029-0028
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750120/aaaaaroz.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S REMARKS FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SENATOR PERCY
TAGS: PFOR, XF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006